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Jordan

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and

Standards

Country Report

2000

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Report Highlights:

This report covers Jordan's Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
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This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Amman, Jordan for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with the local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

SECTION I. FOOD LAWS

The current food control regime is legislated under the Agriculture Law of 1973 and the Public Health Law of 1971. A new agriculture law is pending Parliamentary consideration and is likely to be passed during the next Parliamentary session beginning in November 2000. A new food safety law has been drafted but has not yet been presented to Parliament.

The current food control system attempts to limit human health hazards associated with microbial, parasitical and fungal contamination. Import consignments are also routinely tested for radiation levels and chemical contaminants, including heavy metals, hormones and residue from medicines. Food additives are determined by testing. Less frequent testing is done for pesticide residues.

Imported agricultural and food products are inspected by a border committee composed of representatives from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, the Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology and Customs. The inspection process consists of a visual assessment of the consignment, verification of labeling requirements, taking of samples, testing and evaluating the test results and, if found suitable for human consumption, the consignment is cleared for final Customs processing. Any product with less than half of its shelf-life remaining is not permitted entry into the country. This policy is under review and it is very likely that all food control regulations will be changed.

SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

A. Imported products must comply with labeling and marking requirements issued by the Institute of Standards and Metrology. Legal requirements for labeling are fairly standard although a statement of ingredients in order of preponderance is not required. All labels must either be in Arabic or have a stick-on label in Arabic. In general, the label should contain the name of the products, the manufacturer's name and address, net weight, fortifying matter, lot number (if appropriate) and the date of production and expiration. Local labeling requirements do not include Recommended Daily Intake. (RDIs).

Shelf-life: recently a decision has been taken to review the application of these requirements. The GOJ is working on new specifications for shelf life.

B. Requirements Specific to Nutritional Labeling is not required in Jordan.

SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

No restrictions are applied either for packaging or container type at the Port of Aqaba. However, a maximum weight restriction is applied for discharging the container at the gantry crane of 30.5 tons, units weights more than 30.5 tons can be discharged using shore cranes.

There is no special Municipal waste Disposal Law. In case a cargo needs to be disposed of, an application is filed at the concerned department in the port (i.e. customs, environment) and they approve or reject the request according to type of cargo and its expected damage to the environment.

No specific restrictions are applied on the type of packaging used.

SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

Food additives are regulated by the Ministry of Health. In general, permissible additives and their concentrations are those approved by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. However, the technical standards for foods contain specific lists for food additive and their permissible levels of use. These standards should be referenced to make sure that additives are permitted.

SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS

Pesticide residue in the food chain in Jordan is a sensitive issue. There is only one laboratory in Jordan that is capable of testing for pesticide residue in fresh fruits and vegetables and its turn around time is about two weeks. Therefore, it is not possible to test fresh products and get a result back before the fresh product are consumed. However, non-perishable local and imported agricultural products may be tested for pesticide residue. The technical standards for food and agricultural products require that pesticide residues not exceed the recommended maximum residue levels of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Pesticides used in Jordan must be approved for use and registered. Anyone who attempts to import unregistered pesticides is subject to civil penalties. Small quantities of a new pesticide may be imported for the purposes of submitting the product for registration. New pesticides are approved by the "Pesticides Registration Committee" under the Ministry of Agriculture.

SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Any imported agricultural or food product may be inspected and tested to ensure that it is fit for human consumption. Virtually all prepared and mixed foods are tested at the border. This is likely to change under the new agriculture and food law.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has the authority to inspect food product at the retail and wholesale distribution levels. A MOH representative may enter any place and collect samples for testing. If a product fails to meet technical requirements or is found unfit for human consumption, it is removed from distribution channels and destroyed.

SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

All imported foods should conform with the Jordanian standards issued by the Institute for Standards and Metrology.

SECTION III. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS

Trademarks and/or brand names are protected under domestic law and should be registered with the registrar of Patents and Trademarks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES

Although most imports are subject to tariffs and duties, capital equipment imported by licensed industrial projects is exempt. The ceiling on all duties was brought down to 30 percent as of March 1st 2000, with a 10 percent ceiling on industrial raw materials (inputs). Most supplementary customs taxes, fees and duties on regular imports have been abolished.

--Customs Valuation

The customs law of 1999 was amended in March 2000 to include GATT-compliance criteria for customs valuation (which is based on certified invoices) and to make the valuation process clearly defined and more transparent. The law restricts customs officers' mandate to use arbitrary valuation but still rewards those who uncover invoice misreporting and imposes penalties on importers.

The customs valuation price is CIF-based. The value of the imported good is converted into JD at the official central bank exchange rate (1 JD = USD 1.41). In some cases, invoice or export discounts have been included in the valuation by the customs department. Still, the exporter should consult the local importer to determine how to best grant any such discounts or rebates.

--Import Taxes and Other Related Fees

Customs tariffs are based on the Harmonized System coding practice. Commodities fall under either one of five different tariff rates: zero, 5 percent, 10 percent, 20 percent, and 30 percent, with the exception of tobacco and alcoholic beverages which are subject to a tariff range of 50 - 150 percent, and unwrought gold which is subject to a 0.5 percent tariff rate. The tariff schedule may be accessed at the following web-site:

[Http://www.customs.gov.jo/frametariffs.html](http://www.customs.gov.jo/frametariffs.html)

In addition to customs duties, both imported products and locally produced goods are subject to a 13% general sales tax. Some imports and locally produced goods are subject to a supplementary sales tax, while others are fully exempt. A complete description of these commodities is listed under the general sales tax law, which may be accessed at:

[Http://www.customs.gov.jo/next.html](http://www.customs.gov.jo/next.html)

The government is considering instituting a value-added tax (VAT) in place of the present general sales tax by the end of the year 2000.

--Import Licenses

Import licenses are required for imports of:

- Non-commercial shipments exceeding JD 2,000 in value;
- Foreign cigarette brands;
- Biscuits of all types;
- Mineral water;
- Dried milk for industry;
- Certain goods imported from Syria with which Jordan has special trade balance arrangements;
- Items requiring prior clearance from specific authorities (for a complete list, see “special import provisions”)

Goods entering the country under temporary entry status, bonded goods and goods benefitting from the investment promotion law are exempt from import licenses.

All Jordanian and foreign trading companies must obtain an importer's card from the Ministry of Industry and Trade for customs clearance purposes. At the Ministry a complete and updated list of all import requirements and provisions is periodically issued. For non-trading entities such as banks, hospitals and hotels, the ministry issues a special, “limited” card that allows the import of goods specific to that entity's purpose.

--Import / Export Documentation

According to Article 31 of the Customs Law of 1998 and its amendments, every customs declaration must include the following:

- Maritime or air bill of lading.
- Commercial invoice indicating value, weight, freight and insurance charges etc. All invoices should be notarized by the Jordanian diplomatic mission in the country of origin. Certification by the local chamber of commerce is sufficient, subject to the approval of the customs department director, in cases where a Jordanian consulate is not available.
- A notarized certificate of origin issued by the relevant authority in the exporter's local area.
- Value declaration form for shipments exceeding JD 2,000 (USD 2,820).

The customs department may request other documents related to the shipment as needed. All invoices should describe the imported goods in Arabic.

--Special Import Provisions

Pre-import clearance is required for certain goods. The clearance, once obtained, acts as an import license. However, these clearances are non-automatic. The relevant pre-import license-issuing agency and the respective goods include:

Ministry of Industry and Trade (these are given out in the form of import licenses): rice, flour and its by-products, sugar, wheat, barely and corn;

Ministry of Agriculture: frozen animal semen, live animals, fresh/frozen meat, embalmed wild animals, imported milk products from countries engaged in bilateral trade protocols with Jordan;

Agricultural Marketing Corporation: potatoes, onions, garlic, fresh fruit and vegetables from countries engaged in bilateral trade protocols with Jordan;

Ministry of Health: all types of medical drugs and antibiotics, food supplements for athletes, Potassium Bromide, food dyes, asbestos pipes and panels, frozen ice cream, baby food and milk, laser pens, Oxygen and Nitrogen Oxide;

If a shipment is rejected, there is an appeal system and this is subject to the approval of the Ministry under which the

rejection took place.

APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Ministry of Health
Food Safety & Hygiene Directorate
Tel: (962-6) 5689629
Fax: (962-6) 5688286

Ministry of Industry and Trade
Tel: (962-6) 5602121
Fax: (962-6) 5699464

Ministry of Agriculture
Veterinary Services Directorate
OR
Plant Protection Directorate
Tel: (962-6) 5686151
Fax: (962-6) 5686310

Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology
Tel: (962-6) 5680139
Fax: (962-6) 5681099

Jordan Customs Department
TEL: (962-6) 462-3186/8; 462-4394/6
FAX: (962-6) 464-7791
EMAIL: CUSTOMS@CUSTOMS.GOV.JO
WEB-SITE: HTTP://WWW.CUSTOMS.GOV.JO/

APPENDIX II: OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS

For further help, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, American Embassy, P O Box 354, Amman, Jordan,
Phone: (962-6) 5920101 Ext> 2056, Fax: (962-6) 5920146, [E-mail:hkhoury@usembassy-amman.org.jo](mailto:hkhoury@usembassy-amman.org.jo)